



# Middlesex Middle School School Resource Officer (SRO) Proposal

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Date: 03/27/2018

# Goals

- To increase student comfort and relationships with police
- To increase student resistance to the reporting of at-risk behaviors.
- To increase student knowledge of legal responsibilities.
- To increase police officer/department understanding of student needs.
- To increase police officer/department communication with parents.



# Intended Results

- An improved student culture at school in which students make decisions to avoid at risk behaviors as a result of a trusting relationship between the students and the police. Accomplished by daily teaching and counseling opportunities during the school day and extra curricular activities.
- Assistance with safety planning within the school regarding campus security and emergency/crisis response.

# Darien SRO Background

- Program began in 2012 at DHS
- Role held by Officer James Palmieri until 2015
- Officer Bryan Wallman appointed to position in 2015 and is currently in position

# Darien SRO Background

- Both Officers Palmieri and Wallman made the role “multi-dimensional”
  - Meetings with Parents, Teachers, Board of Ed members and other stakeholders in the community
  - Guest lecturer in classes
  - Health: laws on substance abuse and underage drinking
  - Law and Government: search and seizure issues
  - Act as liaison with DPD, in particular, Youth Division
  - Provide a security presence on campus and at school events after hours

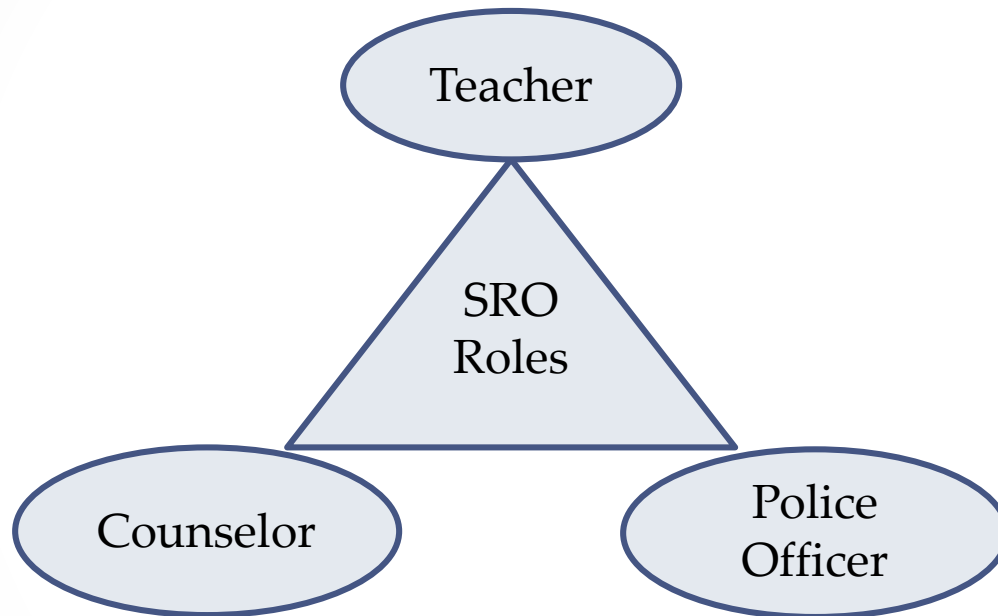
# Darien Youth & DPD Initiatives

- Town Population – approx. 21,000
  - Highest percentage of young people under 18 y.o. compared to other CT Communities (36.8% versus 23.5%) (Census Data, 2005-9)
- DHS & MMS are the two most populated buildings in the town of Darien during the school day
- SRO – DHS youth
- Cop Shop – Darien Depot
- Student Citizen Police Academy – MMS youth
- Cops & Kids – MMS youth
- School Liaison Officers – Elementary & MS youth

# The Next “Piece”

**A School Resource Officer at  
Middlesex Middle School**

# The SRO's Many "Hats"



- Proactive – Teacher & Counselor
- Reactive – Law Enforcement Officer



# The SRO's Many "Hats"

- Teacher Role
  - Instruct classes
  - Guest speaker in classes
  - Coach- DHS SRO's have assisted with Rugby and Wrestling
- Counselor Role
  - Students routinely approach SRO with personal issues
  - Attend support meetings
  - Routinely meet with School Counselors
  - Mentor: a kind, caring, trusted adult
- We found that at DHS, these roles became the primary function of the position

# The SRO's Many "Hats"

- Attendance & involvement in other extra-curricular activities
  - Field trips
  - Sporting events
  - Musicals & plays
  - Graduation
  - Open House

# The SRO's Many "Hats"

- Law Enforcement Role
  - Although the role's primary function is NOT the enforcement of law, should the need arise, a well-trained Darien Police Officer is readily available during and after school hours
  - Liaison between school & DPD
  - Respond to emergency situations, including medical calls for service
  - Make arrests in emergency situations. The SRO is a teacher and counselor- but he is still a sworn police officer.

We've found that in incidents occurring after normal school hours, the availability of a police officer with familiarity of the school community has been a valuable asset

# Why at MMS?

- Times continue to change
- More time to focus on prevention, less on reaction
- “Finger on pulse” – early intervention vs. reaction
- Decrease work-load for Youth Division
  - Juvenile case load has increased significantly since “Raise the Age” fully implemented in 2012)
- SRO routinely is contacted by MMS admin regarding their students for assistance

# Why at MMS?

- Increased calls for service at MMS
  - In 2017-2018 alone the Department has investigated:
    - Bullying cases
    - Underage drinking/narcotics use
    - School threats (determined to be vague, non-specific)
- Youth “are getting older faster”
  - They are exposed to more at earlier age:
    - Social media – this is getting increasingly problematic
    - School/workplace violence incidents
    - Internet

# Why at MMS?

- Strong administrative support at DHS
  - After some initial apprehension, position has become an invaluable asset to both DHS community and DPD
- MMS administrative and teachers' desire
- An SRO is more than just “a cop with a gun in the school” – this initiative has already led to better community collaboration and services for Town youth (JRB, Cops & Kids, etc.)

# Why at MMS?

- The presence of an SRO in MMS would not change the school's disciplinary process.
- The SRO would be available as a resource/advisor on to the administration on law enforcement issues and a good deal of discretion could be used in many cases.

# Training

- Nationally, there are no specific training requirements for the job, although the [National Association of School Resource Officers](#) recommends that officers complete a 40-hour course that includes emergency plans for schools, de-escalation techniques and academic work, including studying the adolescent brain
- Darien SRO's also are CIT certified (Crisis Intervention Training) through the Connecticut Alliance to Benefit Law Enforcement





Thank You!